





Those who cherish Montana's wildlife and wild lands, and who work to preserve its hunting traditions, may remember 2005 as a year of future-minded commitments.

The 2005 legislative session was especially active for Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks. Both the Schweitzer Administration and the Legislature showed their commitment to Montana's highly valued fish, wildlife and state parks by passing and signing into law legislation that:

- **Makes the Block Management Program permanent.** This nationally acclaimed program had been temporary, but now it will continue helping hunters and landowners for years to come.
- **Makes the Habitat Montana Program permanent.** This important yet previously temporary program, which has secured 250,000 acres of prime wildlife habitat over the past 10 years, will continue protecting habitat into the future.
- **Authorizes FWP to increase resident hunting and fishing fees** for the first time in 10 years—on March 1, 2006. The increase will help the department pay for fish and wildlife management cost increases and program additions.

- **Retains the Private Land/Public Wildlife Council**, which reviews the Block Management Program.
- **Makes the Fishing Access Enhancement Program permanent.** This program provides incentives to landowners who grant anglers access across private land to public fishing waters.

These historic programs will help FWP continue to maintain and enhance Montana's cherished fish, wildlife and state parks. The Schweitzer Administration and FWP's department personnel are personally and professionally committed to the broad and multi-faceted job of conserving these resources so they can be enjoyed by all—today, tomorrow, and far into the future.

Brian Schweitzer  
Montana State Governor

M. Jeff Hagener  
Montana FWP Director





## PROVIDING OPPORTUNITIES

### Great Hunting and Fishing

Deer populations are thriving in most of the state. In northeastern Montana, white-tailed deer and antelope are recovering from the harsh winter of two years ago.

Elk are abundant in much of the state, which has led to generally liberal hunting regulations.

A mild winter over much of Montana in 2005-2006 and a moist spring resulted in good winter survival and plenty of cover for pheasants and grouse, especially in FWP

Regions 4, 5, 6 and 7.

More than 6,200 hunters applied for Montana's bison hunt, the first in 15 years. Fifty Montanans received licenses, 16 bison licenses were offered to Montana's Indian tribes, as provided in law, and 10 licenses went to hunters drawn for last season's proposed hunt. Bison hunts were set for Nov. 15, 2005 to Jan. 15, 2006 and Jan. 16, 2006 to Feb. 15, 2006.

Anglers enjoy roughly 2.75 million days fishing in Montana. About 70 percent of anglers are Montana residents.

### Convenient

Applicants for licenses and special permits can apply online at FWP offices or by mailing in a paper application. Of the 279,195 total applicants, more than 25 percent used the Automated Licensing System or applied on the Internet, roughly an eight percent increase over last year.

New, flexible, waterproof carcass tags were issued with new validation requirements.

## STATE PARKS AND RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

### New and Enhanced State Parks

Brush Lake State Park, northeast of Dagmar, is the newest park and the first in northeastern Montana. It offers boating, swimming and group use.

The state celebrated the Lewis and Clark bicentennial by preserving lands at Travelers' Rest State Park near Lolo, Tower Rock State Park near Craig and Ulm Pishkun State Park near Ulm.

Improvements were made to Clark's Lookout north of Dillon and Missouri Headwaters State Park near Three Forks. FWP also accepted two conservation easements donated near Giant Springs State Park in Great Falls.

The Corps of Discovery II, a traveling National Parks Service exhibit, entertained thousands of visitors at Giant Springs and Travelers' Rest state parks.

### Benefiting Communities

Recreational trails and outdoor recreation facility projects in communities across the state received grants totaling over \$1.7 million to make improvements for snowmobile riders, off-



highway vehicle riders, cross-country skiers, hikers and boaters.

Major capital improvement projects were completed at West Shore State Park on Flathead Lake, Cooney State Park near Columbus, Spring Meadow State Park in Helena and Pictograph Cave State Park near Billings.

### Managing for All Interests

Recreation rules on the Beaverhead and Big Hole rivers will preserve a quality angling experience for Montanans and visitors. On the Blackfoot River, a new

Each year residents and nonresidents spend a total of nearly \$1 billion in Montana on hunting, fishing and wildlife watching, supporting 8,100 jobs.





recreational permit system will help manage commercial use, competitive events and organized group activities.

### Increasing Public Access to Recreation

Four new fishing access sites were established on the Little Blackfoot River in western Montana, Robertson Creek on the lower Flathead, Sun River in north central Montana and Piedmont Pond near Whitehall.

About 1,250 landowners enrolled 8.5 million acres in the Block Management Program, providing public hunting access that amounted to roughly 400,000 hunter days afield.

## PROTECTING HABITAT AND HEALTH

### Conserving Habitat

The new 1,900-acre Bull River Wildlife Management Area was created between Troy and Noxon, and four existing WMAs—Garrity Mountain, Blue-Eyed Nellie, Beckman and Ninepipe—were expanded.

The Landowner Incentive Program, funded by federal and upland game bird license fees, now holds over 180,000 acres in 30-year lease agreements intended to preserve sagebrush habitat for sage grouse and 52 other birds, mammals, reptiles and amphibians.

### Conserving Health

A new Chronic Wasting Disease Management

Plan will guide how wildlife populations are managed should the disease be found in Montana. FWP monitors for CWD in deer and elk with the cooperation of big game hunters. Over 7,000 animals have been tested, and CWD has not yet been detected.

New laws regulate the import and possession of exotic wildlife species based on the level of threat they pose to native wildlife, fisheries, habitats, livestock, agricultural production and human health and safety.

A statewide task force assessed the need to control game animals within Montana communities. The group supported modifying state law to allow the hunting of deer within city limits as one management option. FWP will provide technical assistance to local task forces developing community-specific plans.

### Managing

Montana's first comprehensive assessment of its fish, wildlife and habitats was submitted to the federal government for approval as part of a national effort to keep "species in need" from being listed under the federal Endangered Species Act. Montana is using federal funding to help conserve some of the species that need attention.

For elk, a new adaptive management plan sets standard, liberal or restrictive hunting packages based on elk populations, bull:cow ratios, habitat evaluations and other information.



### Enforcing

In addition to enforcement field work, wardens devoted about 7,400 hours to public presentations on education and safety, and contacted roughly 9,200 landowners about the Block Management Program, game damage issues and hunting and fishing access.

Two new full-time regional investigators were authorized by the Legislature, as was a warden trainee program that gives college seniors work experience at FWP so they can prepare to apply to be Montana wardens.



### Monitoring



During the 2005 general deer and elk hunting seasons, state wildlife officials asked more than 100,000 hunters to help monitor wolves by using the FWP website to report wolf sightings and signs of wolves.

### Communicating

Anglers and boaters at fishing access sites and boat ramps learned about the threat of illegal fish introductions as FWP personnel inspected boats and trailers for invasive species.

Angler education efforts and surveys indicate that about 75 percent of anglers are aware of aquatic nuisance species such as zebra mussels and 50 percent are getting their information from FWP.

## COMMUNICATIONS AND EDUCATION

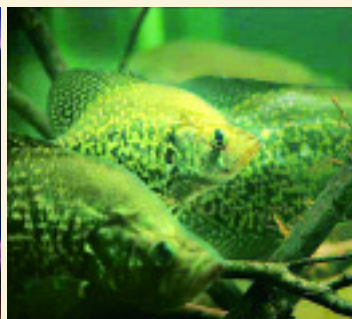
### Easy Access to Information

FWP's website served more than 2 million visitors, a 25 percent increase. New features on the site included State Parks visitor planning assistance, the Montana Challenge pages, the Montana Comprehensive Fish and Wildlife Strategy pages, enhancements to the hunting and fishing guide and streaming video.

Over 2,000 copies of *Owning Eden*, a 12-minute DVD produced with Montana's new landowners in mind, were distributed to introduce new landowners to issues and opportunities they will face and the Western culture and communities they are joining.

The twelfth annual Becoming an Outdoors-Woman workshop was held at Lubrecht Forest east of Missoula. Other BOW sessions for outdoor women included a "Jane Deere" workshop for those interested in natural resources and agriculture.

The Hunter and Bow Hunter Education programs reached about 10,000 Montanans with introductory training for hunters. The Hooked on Fishing Program provided aquatic education in nearly 200 classrooms and reached over 4,000 upper elementary level students.



Montana has over 600 vertebrate species; about 80 are managed game species and 11 are threatened or endangered species.



Opportunities to Make a Difference

Six of FWP's seven regions (Regions 1, 2, 3, 5, 6 and 7) have established a citizen advisory council, or are forming one. The councils represent the diverse viewpoints of local communities and meet regularly to discuss current issues.

Encouraging Public Participation

A "Montana Challenge" project team compiled information to help Montanans explore key questions about their relationship with natural resources, the value of fish and wildlife and future public policy decisions facing the state. Details are available to the public on the FWP website.



Setting High Standards

Montana Outdoors magazine was named the top state conservation magazine in the country by a national organization of conservation communicators. The magazine also won four writing awards.

The new One Shot Hunter Program encouraged recent hunter education graduates to develop good hunting and shooting habits.



New hunters who harvested an elk, deer or antelope with a single shot could earn the title "One Shot Hunter," and receive a certificate and a hat. The program will continue in 2006.

2006 REVENUE SOURCES

Hunting and Fishing Licenses

This revenue source includes all license sales, interest earnings and miscellaneous revenues. Nonresident sales account for approximately two-thirds of license revenue.

Federal Revenue

Montana receives a variety of federal funds for fish and wildlife programs, including funds from the Federal Aid in Sport Fish and Wildlife Restoration programs. More than \$6 million comes from an excise tax on sporting arms and ammunition, handguns and certain archery equipment (Pittman-Robertson). An additional \$7 million in federal funding comes from an excise tax on fishing equipment and electric trolling motors, a federal fuel tax and import duties on fishing tackle and pleasure boats (Wallop-Breaux). Montana received about \$1 million from the federal State Wildlife Grant program to help fund research and management programs for species that have special conservation needs. The Land and Water Conservation Fund provided additional federal funding for State Parks and local communities.

Other State Revenue

Other state revenue sources include a portion of the state's lodging facilities use tax, a small percentage of the state fuel tax, a portion of light vehicle registration fees, nonresident State Parks fees and interest earnings from coal severance tax receipts.

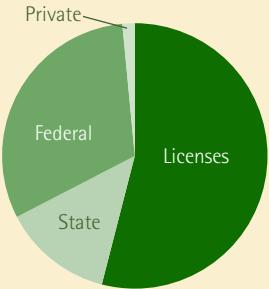
State General Fund

A common misconception is that FWP is funded with Montana tax dollars. But in fact, the agency receives no state general fund revenue.

REVENUE SOURCE DETAILS

This illustration shows how FWP is funded. Actual annual revenues may fall above or below the figures used here. FWP must obtain Legislative authorization to spend any of the funds available from these sources:

Montana State General Fund	0.0%	\$0
Hunting and Fishing Licenses	53.4%	\$42,933,858
Other State Revenue	14.4%	\$11,528,530
Federal Revenue	30.7%	\$24,682,707
Private Revenue	1.5%	\$1,168,750
TOTAL REVENUE:	100%	\$80,313,845



2006 PLANNED EXPENDITURES

FWP SPENDS ITS MONEY TWO WAYS:

**Operations:** For the day-to-day management of Montana's fish, wildlife and parks resources.

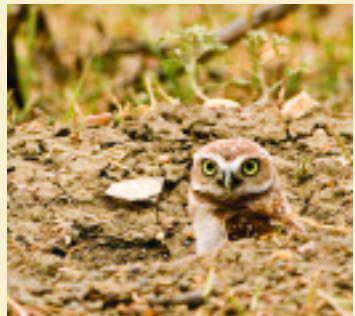
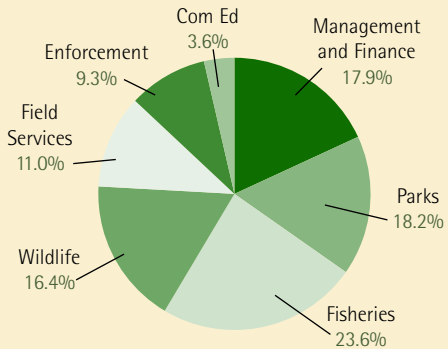
**Capital:** For major repair and maintenance of FWP properties, for renovation and construction of facilities and to protect, enhance and acquire critical habitats.

FWP TOTAL:

Operations	\$64,423,358
Capital	\$15,890,487
Total	\$80,313,845

How operating expenditures are used:

Management and Finance	17.9%
Wildlife	16.4%
Fisheries	23.6%
Parks	18.2%
Field Services	11.0%
Enforcement	9.3%
Communication and Education	3.6%



Montana's Comprehensive Fish and Wildlife Conservation Strategy will guide projects to help conserve all the fish, wildlife, and natural places that draw people and revenue to the state.



**For Continuous News Updates**

For FWP news and to comment on proposed plans, go to the FWP website at: [fwp.mt.gov](http://fwp.mt.gov).  
Telephone Device/Deaf (TDD) number: 406-444-1200.





## ABOUT MONTANA FWP

Governor of the  
State of Montana

Brian Schweitzer

FWP Director

M. Jeff Hagener

FWP Commission

Steve Doherty, Chairman  
(Great Falls)

Tim Mulligan, Vice Chairman  
(Whitehall)

Shane Colton  
(Billings)

Vic Workman  
(Whitefish)

John Brenden  
(Scobey)

### Mission Statement

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks, through its employees and citizen commission, provides for the stewardship of the fish, wildlife, parks and recreational resources of Montana, while contributing to the quality of life for present and future generations.

For more information, visit:  
[fwp.mt.gov](http://fwp.mt.gov)

#### Photo Credits

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*Montana Outdoors* is Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks' popular, full-color magazine featuring the latest information on conservation issues, new management programs, and fishing, hunting, and parks recreation. Get a one-year subscription (six issues) for only \$9. Call toll-free (800) 678-6888 or subscribe on-line at [www.fwp.mt.gov/mtoutdoors](http://www.fwp.mt.gov/mtoutdoors).

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STEVEN AKRE

Documented in the journals of Lewis and Clark, Tower Rock is one of Montana's newest state parks. The park is located between Craig and Pelican Point on the Missouri River, south of Great Falls.

## Did you know?

- Montana hunters, resident and nonresident combined, spend about \$240 million annually on transportation, lodging, food, guide fees and other purchases, excluding license fees.
- Anglers, resident and nonresident, spend about \$235 million in Montana on transportation, lodging, food, guide fees and other direct purchases, excluding license fees.
- Montana has the highest per capita hunting participation in the U.S. at nearly 25 percent of Montanans 16 years of age and older.
- Roughly 30 percent of Montanans are anglers.
- About 1.6 million visitor days were spent at Montana's 50 State Parks. Over 111,000 visitors participated in tours, educational programs and 45 special events.
- FWP recently confirmed the state's 500th unauthorized fish introduction. At least 50 different species of fish have been illegally dumped into state waters causing harm to native species such as cutthroat trout.
- FWP is an active member of the Interstate Wildlife Violator Compact, which now includes 21 member states that recognize fishing, hunting or trapping privilege suspensions in their state after they have been imposed on violators in any other member state.
- Congress passed a bill in May 2005 reaffirming the authority of states to regulate hunting and fishing.